

B R I E F R E A S O N S

Humbly Offered, Against

Passing the Bill for Convex-Lights.

See the
Procla-
mation.



LL Monopolies in all Ages have been esteemed Destructive, Oppressive, and against the Rights of the Subjects, and contrary to *Magna Charta*, and many other Statutes, and to the Common Law: And it was solemnly Adjudged so in the 44th Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, in *Cook's* 11th Report, in the Case of *Monopolies*; and many other Cases.

The same was so Declared by Proclamation in the First Year of King *James* the First: And by a Statute made in the 21th Year of his Reign, *Cap. 3*. Yet under a *Proviso*, to grant Letters Patents to the first Inventers of New Manufactures, for Fourteen Years; Not contrary to Law, nor Hurtful to the People.

The Letters Patents in the Bill mentioned, Dated the 27th of *Febr.* 1684, are a *Monopoly*, and not within the said *Proviso* of 21 *Jac. primi*; Because it is no New Invention, *Convex-Glasses* having been used above Forty Years in this Kingdom for *Lights*, as may be undoubtedly proved: And next, It is Hurtful to the Subject, in restraining their lawful Liberty of using *Convex Glasses*, for the Publick Good, without the License of these Patentees; for which they may Exact upon the Subject what they please. And lastly, It lays a Restraint upon *Ingenuity*, to Improve *Convex-Glasses* to the highest advantage; and that only for the sole Profit of some few Private Persons.

Now the Preamble of this Bill declares, That these *Convex-Lights* have been Carried on in pursuance of the said *Letters Patents*; and that the *Letters Patents* are grounded upon an Act of Parliament in that case made and provided. Neither of which Allegations is true in Fact: For

There is not any Act of Parliament that warrants these *Letters Patents*, for the Reasons above-said: Nor are *Convex-Lights* so much as mentioned in the Letters Patents.

And Note, As this Bill is Penn'd, it far Exceeds the Letters Patents themselves, to the great Hurt and Grievance of the Subject. For,

I. It wholly takes away the Right and Liberty of the Subject, allowed by the Letters Patents, and by the said Statute, to Try at Law, Whether this be a New Invention, or not? And, Secondly, Whether this Grant be Hurtful to the People, or not?

II. It far Exceeds the Letters Patents, (*First*) In that it Grants these Persons a liberty and privilege to set up and use these *Convex-Lights* in all Publick places, which by the Letters Patents they had no power to do. (*Secondly*,) And that no other person whatsoever may set up or use any Lights with *Convex Glasses*, in any Street or Publick place, for Fourteen Years, from the 15th day of *December*, 1690: Which Power is more than the Letters Patents could or did intend to grant; and is a longer time by Six years, than the Letters Patents could or did pretend to grant. (*Thirdly*,) This Bill gives an absolute Power to any one Justice of Peace, to give the Property and Goods of the Subject to these Patentees, to their own Use, without Trial by their Peers, and without Appeal; which is conceived to be directly contrary to *Magna Charta*, and the Fundamental Right of the Subject.

For which Reasons 'tis humbly hoped, That this Bill (under this Government) will never pass into a Law.

Particular REASONS against this BILL, Humbly Offered by the City of London.

I. IT is the Ancient and Undoubted Right of the City, to Light it self, in such Manner, and for such Time, as they find most fit and convenient: And for that purpose they now have, and Time out of mind have had, many Acts of *Common-Council* and Customs so to do; the which they have altered from Time to Time, as Occasion hath required: All which will be much interrupted and disturb'd (if not wholly taken away by this Bill;) which Powers and Customs amongst other things have been Ratified and Confirmed by divers Acts of *Parliament*.

II. Should this Bill pass, it gives a Power to Strangers to set up *Lights* in *London*, by their own Authority; and to Employ what Agents they please, at all Times in the Night, with Ladders to Trim their *Lights*, not subject to the Government and Laws of the City; whereby their Houses and Shops will be Exposed to Robbers and Thieves: If not by their Agents, yet by others in their Disguise.

III. If Profit may be made by *Publick Lights* in the City, it seems most Reasonable, That such Profit should accrue towards the Supply of the *Neccessitous ORPHANS*, rather than to Enrich Foreigners and Strangers.

IV. It has been Declared, That the Passing this Bill will be no prejudice to the Rights and Privileges of the City: If it be so intended, (and this Bill must Pass,) it seems very Reasonable it should be so Express, to prevent all Doubts and Disputes concerning the same.